

August 10, 2005

The Honorable Rya W. Zobel
United States District Court
John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse
1 Courthouse Way
Boston, MA 02210

Dear Judge Zobel,

My name is Elaine Marshall, and I was the foster mother of Carla Paiva. I have been a media paraprofessional at the Westport Middle School in Westport, MA, for 19 years. I have been married for 36 years and have two adult sons. Including Russell Isabel, (Carla's son) I have two grandsons. We were foster parents from about 1978 to 1991 taking in four long-term foster children.

Carla was our only foster child for nine years, going home for a period of time twice in between. We had stopped taking in foster children after Carla was returned home the first time because my children were getting older and I didn't know what kind of influences other foster children might have on them. When I was asked to take Carla back, I did it without hesitation, knowing what a wonderful and caring girl she was. The last time Carla returned to live with us she was pregnant with Russell at the age of 16. She stayed with us for six months after Russell was born and then moved in with Russell's father. Carla and Russell have stayed close to us in a family relationship all through the years and continue to, till this day.

Carla is a wonderful mother. Her son is her life. If she were to be incarcerated it would be devastating to his life. Her biological family had many problems, including the lack of knowledge of raising children. The circle will never be broken if this trauma is inflicted on her son, whom she has nurtured into a fine young man. Carla has been Russell's support though his ADHD and all his needs. When she was pregnant some people had told her not to have him but she wanted her child. Being a young mother she has made mistakes like we all do but did a good job raising him the best she knew how. Now she is worried she might lose him. While children as young as 10 years old are out on the street in Fall River at midnight, Carla always made sure her son was in early because she did not want him in any trouble. Carla was also strict with him in the daytime wanting to know where he was at all times.

We noticed a change in Carla after having four eptopic pregnancies and one miscarriage, which led to having her fallopian tubes removed. They tried a series of in vitro fertilization which failed. All of this treatment and disappointment put a great strain on their marriage in a two-year period. Carla desperately wanted to have children with Armind and became very depressed when this did not happen. I believe these hormonal changes were just too much for her and she started making poor choices and not caring about life.

The trouble that she is facing now is what has brought her

back to reality.

Carla's brothers and sisters have always looked up to her as the one in the family that had done much better in her life and always set good examples for the rest of them. Carla has eight siblings.

Carla went to school to be a certified nurse's assistant. That is a very hard job to do and not everyone in their lives could do it. Thank god for people that can.

Russell just turned 15 years old and is a fine young man. Having ADHD makes it twice as hard to carry on in life for both Russell and his mother. He will be beginning high school in the fall and we all want him to stay in school so he can get a good education. I am afraid he will lose interest if his life is turned upside down.

My husband is 61 with a heart condition hoping to retire at 62 and I am 58. Taking Russell in to live with us would make it too stressful in the home. Carla's family also has a lot of issues of their own. He really needs to be with his mother who has the patience for him.

Thank you,


Elaine Marshall